

Bereavement

and

Loss

A Guide for Young People

The
Psychological
Service



EDUCATION RESOURCES

We all experience loss, change or bereavement at some point in our lives. No two people will think or feel the same way about it – we are all different.

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for young people who have had a major loss or change in their lives or who are worried about change, e.g. a parent is very ill, parents separate, a move of house/school, fear of losing friends, loss of a pet.

Bereavement – the loss of someone when they die

It is normal to feel a whole range of emotions:- shock; confusion; helplessness; numbness; sadness; relief; anger; disbelief; dream- like state. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and it is normal that feelings change over time.

Signs of stress which you may experience:

- Not sleeping properly.
- Having nightmares.
- Aches and pains.
- Going off food/eating too much.
- Avoiding certain places or activities.
- Getting grumpy or short tempered.
- Not being able to concentrate e.g. on school work.
- Crying or wanting to cry.
- Getting ‘giggly’.

There is no getting away from the fact that it hurts when someone close to you dies and you suffer loss.

Here are some of the things people have said after a bereavement or a loss:

- What if I do not feel anything?
- I keep expecting the person to walk through the door.
- I am beginning to forget what they looked like.
- I feel it is my fault.
- I never got a chance to say goodbye.
- If only I'd
- I feel I need to be strong for mum/dad.
- I miss my old school friends.
- Whenever I am having fun, I feel guilty.

What can I do?

Here are some things that might help:

- Talk about it with someone you trust.
- Ask questions about what happened and what is likely to happen now.
- Write about or draw how you feel.
- Try to find ways to relax.
- Think up new routines – you may miss some of the things you used to do with the person who has died or left.
- Get some physical exercise.

Funerals

If someone has died you may:-

- Go to the funeral.
- Have a simple ceremony in memory of the person, such as lighting a candle (do this with an adult's permission and be sure to put this in a safe place).
- Write down what you felt about the person – you may even want to imagine the letter is being written to them.
- Make a scrapbook to keep memories alive.

Moving on

Other than trying the suggestions we have given you, there are no rules about how long it takes to get over loss or a major change. It may take time.

How long will I go on feeling sad and upset?

You will probably always feel a little sad, especially at special times like anniversaries and birthdays.

Will I forget them?

No. Memories are important and stay with us forever. Thinking about and sharing memories of the person who has died helps us to keep them alive in our minds. It is important to talk about the person and how you feel. Knowing them helped make you who you are. That part of them will always be with you.

When will I have fun again?

Even while you are grieving, it is okay to laugh and enjoy yourself. The person who has died would not want you to be unhappy forever.

Other Types of Loss

Sometimes a major change in your life can lead to feelings similar to those produced by the death of someone in your life e.g. – family break-ups, moving school, moving house. Let's look at family break up in particular.

Effect of family break-up

This can be like a bereavement, even though no-one has died. If your parents have split up, please remember it is **not your fault – ever**. After a break-up you may see less of one of your parents. If you miss them, you could:-

- Keep in touch by letter, postcard, e-mail, text or phone.
- Keep them up to date – let them know what's going on in your life.

Another example is a move of house or school – you may not see as much of your old friends. You could:-

- Send a card.
- Phone or text.
- Perhaps arrange to visit, if possible.

We have a separate leaflet in Psychological Service on family break-up/divorce. You will get more information from that leaflet.

Key Message

It is hard when children and young people experience the loss of someone or something they have loved and has been an important part of their lives. Don't feel you have to go through the experience on your own. Speak to your parents/carers/extended family/ friends/ teachers – we all need support at times like these. Support from others can help us feel strong again.

Useful Contacts where you may get more information and support:

G.P. and Health Visitor

SLC Social Work resources Children and Young People Counselling Services - 01698 527200

Winston's Wish Family Line – 0845 2030405

The Haven – 012698 727884

Yorkhill Family Bereavement Service – 0141 201 9257

South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service Centres

Hamilton Psychological Service Centre

23 Beckford Street

Hamilton

ML3 0BT

Tel: 01698 455800

Cam/Glen Psychological Service Centre

Cambuslang Gate

27 Main Street

Cambuslang

G72 7EX

Tel: 0141 613 5160

Lanark Psychological Service Centre

Council Offices

South Vennel

Lanark

ML11 7JT

Tel: 01555 673249

For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please
phone 01698 455800 or email enquiries@slcpsych.org.uk

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



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